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THE MORAL FORCES
WHICH
DEFEAT THE HYGIENIC
REGULATION OF SOCIAL VICE.

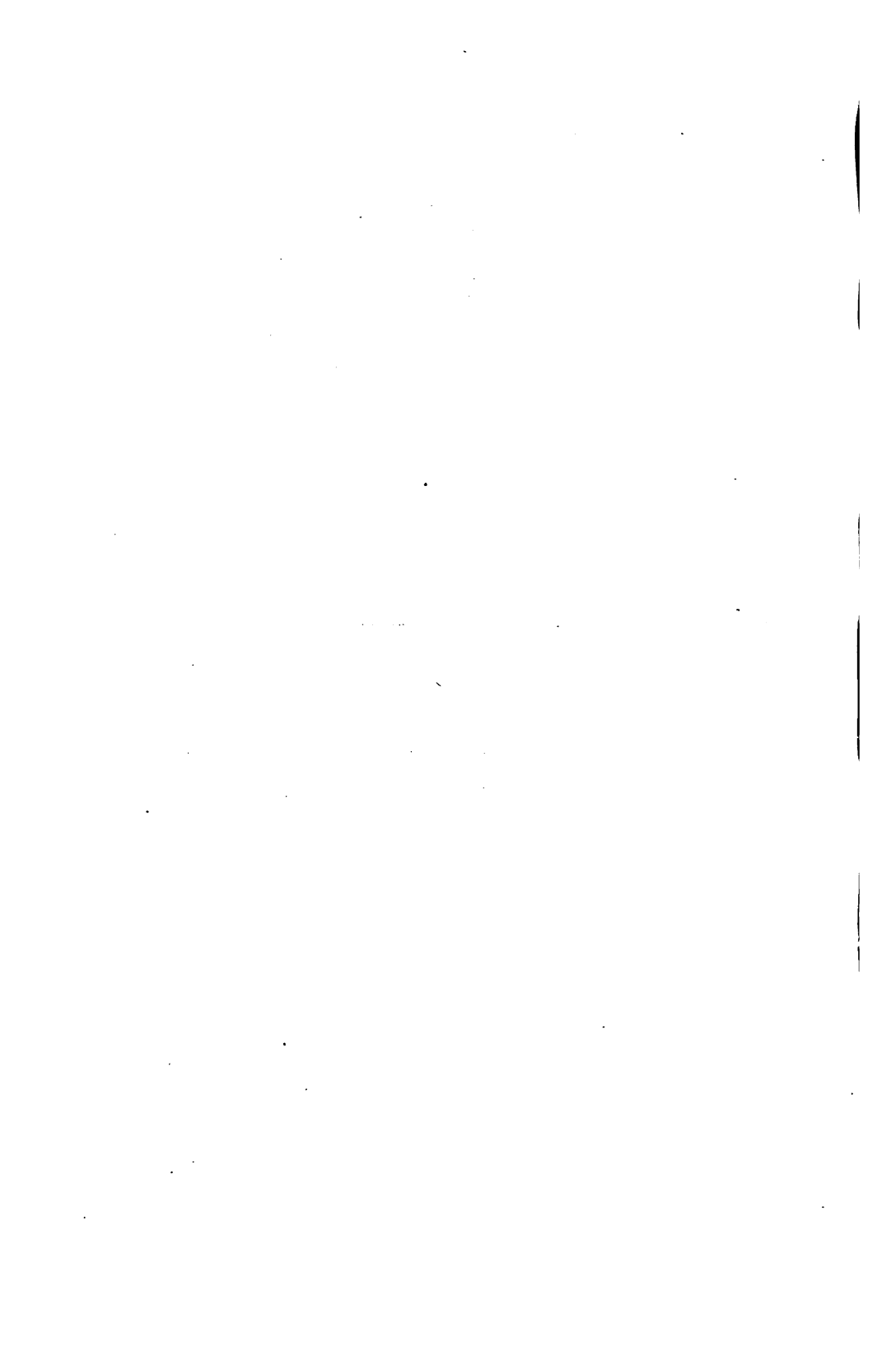
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THE MORAL FORCES WHICH DEFEAT THE HYGIENIC REGULATION OF SOCIAL VICE.

SOCIAL problems are generally complex and many sided. But in our go-a-head age this truth is so often forgotten by social Reformers, that their efforts are in many cases neutralised, and in others prove disastrous, because of the incomplete views upon which their practical measures are founded. The active philanthropy of the age directs public attention to some grave evil that afflicts society, and thereupon evokes a general feeling that "something must be done." Although this condition of the public mind is one through which society must inevitably pass, on the way to better things, it is fraught with danger. It is the period of twilight in which the true bearings of the remedies proposed are not clearly discerned—the period in which the community, suffering under the twinges of a newly-awakened conscience, is most of all anxious to silence the unwelcome monitor without the trouble or unpleasantness of looking too deeply into the social sore. Hence it is the period in which mere nostrums have more than a chance of adoption. Happily, in matters requiring legislation, the *vis inertiae* of the legislative machine, usually puts a wholesome check on the adoption of crude proposals, and saves the nation from actual disaster. But it sometimes happens that a knot of Specialists succeed in getting the ear of the permanent officials of some department of the Administration, and, priming them with plausible but superficial views, manage to push their nostrum quietly through Parliament, and it becomes law. That position once attained, it is difficult to retrace the step, however clear it may be that in this, as in other instances, "a little knowledge" has been "a dangerous thing."

The most striking instance in our own day and country—perhaps the most striking that history may ever record—of hasty legislation, promoted by a specialist clique, and founded on the narrowest possible view of the evil to be dealt with, is that which established the sanitary supervision of the Social Evil in this country. It was purposely done in a hurry, purposely done with secrecy, and the country was successfully kept in ignorance of the measure, till it had been three times amended, and had been more or less in force in certain districts for more than five years. The first Act was passed in 1864. It was replaced by one more extensive and more stringent in 1866, and the latter had its scope enlarged by the Acts of 1868 and 1869—the official title of the measure, as it now stands, being "The Contagious Diseases Acts, 1866 to 1869."

In 1870, when the nation first became aware of the existence of these laws, and of the surreptitious manner in which they had been passed, a storm of indignation passed over the whole country, but without sweeping the measure away. It required a greater awakening than that of a temporary storm—a movement mightier than indignation alone—a wider knowledge of the whole question of social vice—deeper searchings of the national heart and conscience—more lasting and more painful earnestness—to undo what had been so easily and so surreptitiously done.

One thing should be carefully noted. The specialists intended these "Contagious Diseases Acts" to be only the first step towards the application of similar measures to the whole country. They have never withdrawn from this intention. Fresh avowals of it are continually cropping up. Indeed it is a settled point among those of them who have most deeply studied the subject, that in order to ensure the success of this *régime*, all the civilised world must be placed under it. So that we have here a question of the first magnitude to deal with, and not a mere local affair, applicable to certain naval and military districts, as is sometimes ingeniously, if not ingenuously, stated.

We have said that these measures are founded on the very narrowest view of the evil to be dealt with, and we must make good our assertion. This is an easy task. For few will deny that social profligacy sadly weakens the family ties which are the mainstay of society itself, and on the maintenance of which the national progress and vigour primarily depend. This profligacy is found in every rank of society, from the highest to the lowest. It fills with abomination and rank selfishness the hearts and souls of the men who engage in it, poisoning all the current of their daily life, and spreading around them the seeds of a fatal moral contagion; and it tends to produce a puny and feeble progeny instead of a strong and healthy race. It demands for its gratification the unceasing sacrifice of multitudes of women and girls, who also become centres from which the moral pestilence is poured into the social atmosphere. These are its salient features. But the Medical Specialists who advocate the sanitary supervision of the evil, over-look all these, and concentrate their attention upon the one fact that it is productive of serious bodily disease; and they go to work in a way that in their opinion will mitigate this one feature, regardless of the fact that their nostrum tends to increase every other bad result of the vice.

Perhaps we ought not to be surprised that medical men, as a rule, commit the mistake of taking this merely professional view of the matter. They are so much accustomed to deal with such infectious diseases as small-pox, scarlet fever, measles and the like—so used to having their directions as to isolation for preventing infection from these diseases attended to—that it is perhaps natural for them on the one hand to claim an equally unquestioning attention to their suggestions in regard to disease resulting from social vice; and, on the other, to fail to recognise the radical difference between the one and the other, arising from the social and moral forces with which in the latter case they have inevitably to reckon. The medical questions which have any direct connection with morals are very few. And the professional habit arising from this circumstance, of looking merely at immediate and material cause and effect in relation to the propagation of disease, unconsciously begets a narrowness and exclusiveness of view, unfavourable to soundness of judgment, when moral considerations become, as in this case, an essential part of the problem.

The moral, social and judicial bearings of this question vastly outweigh those which are hygienic or sanitary. The method of dealing with it will therefore be decided by the former, and to these all the demands of mere hygienic and sani-

tary specialists will have to bend. The medical profession must not expect the nation to relegate to them the decision of a question of such importance which lies so largely outside of their professional studies, and for dealing with which they can therefore claim no special qualification. The public do not profess to have, nor do they need on this matter, any knowledge of medical details, but they are conscious of having a sure and certain guide in the clear teachings of the great moral law, which they are quite competent to apply, and which will ultimately settle the question. Nay, further; we do not hesitate to say that the time will come when many of the specialists themselves will acknowledge with shame, that "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise," and that, after all, they ought to have looked to the moral aspects of the question for the solution of even the hygienic and sanitary.

There are points, however, in relation to the Specialist modes of operation, which the public can understand, and ought to understand. These it is our purpose now to pass in review.

The Medical Specialists have a very clear, simple, and apparently convincing creed. It is this:—The removing from the market of social vice of all women in a condition to spread disease, cannot fail to promote the public health * *Cannot fail*—that is their point. With comparatively few exceptions, all medical men claim to be, as compared with the unprofessional public, *Specialists* in relation to this department of knowledge. But there are two kinds of Specialists—the skilled and the unskilled—those who know much and those who know very little. Ninety-nine per cent. of them belong to the latter class, and it generally happens that the less they know, the more authoritative and oracular are their deliveries. They know the creed well. They talk of it as the easiest possible thing to put into practice, and they assure the public that *it must succeed*. On the other hand there are a few Specialists—probably not more than two score in all Europe and America—who know much more than their creed, because they have carefully watched its practical application and have laboriously studied every detail with a view to perfecting its methods. These are the Skilled Specialists. They bear the same relation to the other class, as does the Astronomer Royal to a man who has looked a few times through a telescope and who knows the names of a few planets and stars. They are much less sanguine than their unskilled brethren, as to the ease of putting the creed, simple though it is, into practice. Indeed, they are continually setting forth the great difficulty of the task, and pointing out serious impediments to its success. Not one in a hundred of the medical profession knows anything of the researches of these *skilled* Specialists. And we do not hesitate to assert that, until they have carefully studied the art of carrying out their creed as set forth by these skilled men (whom for convenience we call Regulationists), they cannot understand even their own side of the question—much less are they qualified to be leaders of public opinion.

The great majority of Regulationists are medical men. But some of them are administrators by profession, the chief of whom are Mons. Lecour, the late prefect of the Parisian police department, which carries out the Regulation system in that city, and Mons. Lenaers, the late head of the police at Brussels.

* Regulationists write as though they expected to *stamp out* the diseases arising from social vice by measures applied to one sex only. We lay no stress in this paper on the supreme folly of such an expectation, because we are treating only on the influence of *moral* forces. In order to give the Regulationist theories the interpretation most favourable to their advocates, we have stated the creed in the most moderate and reasonable form, and as indicating no greater expectation than that of "promoting the public health." We contend that moral forces prevent the attainment of even this very moderate result.

One of the first things that strikes the student of Regulationist doctrine and practice is, that the greatest difficulties encountered by the skilled men are administrative, and lie beyond the domain of medical science. If the regulations referred to cattle, the creed would stand good, and fact would accord with theory. But human motive comes in, unbidden and unwelcome. It raises a host of subtle and counteracting influences—moral forces in fact—for which the creed makes no allowance, and, *volens volens*, the matter is removed at one stroke from the domain of medicine to the realm of morals.

This is not the only matter in which the faculty have been compelled to take cognizance of human motive as an important factor working against their cherished and apparently reliable theories. In regard to quarantine as a means of protection against the importation of infectious diseases, an International Medical Congress, at Vienna, called to consider the whole subject some years ago, decided that a too strict enforcement of it defeats its purpose, by arousing powerful motives for evading it. If then in a matter so simple as quarantine, the very narrow range of human motives which come into play, operate so seriously, how much more are the stronger and more complicated motives aroused by attempts to regulate so complex a matter as social vice, likely to defeat the best laid schemes of the medical specialist.

The first step of the Regulationist is to select and enrol the persons upon whom he will operate. Here and there he makes feeble proposals in regard to profligate men. But seldom, indeed, does he really carry them out, or even intend to do so, except in the way of increasing the convenience, the luxury or the mock respectability of their resorts. He practically confines his efforts to the sanitation of profligate women. But of these he soon finds, to his utter surprise, that with his very best endeavours he can only secure a very small proportion. The system has been in force in Paris for nearly a hundred years, and prodigious efforts have been made there to perfect it. And yet Mons. Lecour asserts that not more than one-sixth of the prostitute women have been, or could be, brought under its operation, and that this proportion is continually decreasing. He writes, as if in despair, "The Administration has redoubled its activity, * * * * it has finally succeeded in maintaining in a satisfactory condition the sanitary state of the registered women" *; and yet "prostitution is increasing and becomes daily more dangerous to the public health." †

Here we have three notable facts:

- 1st, A decreasing number of women under the regulations, side by side with
- 2nd, An increasing number who successfully evade the regulations in spite of the utmost vigilance of a police armed with "practically irresponsible power," and
- 3rd, A continuous increase of the sanitary risks which the regulations aim to stamp out.

The City of Brussels has had an experience in this matter dating from the year 1789. In 1844 the regulations were remodelled, and prior to 1877 the Brussels arrangements were again and again referred to by regulationists as a model worthy of being followed everywhere. But in that year Mons. Lenaers presented to the "Collège des Burgmestre et 'Echevins" or City Council a report on the working of this model regulation, which, like the writings of Mons. Lecour, virtually confesses its failure. There, as in Paris, the complaint is of a

* La Prostitution à Paris et à Londres, 1789-1870. Par C. J. Lecour. Paris, 1870, p. 255.

† Ibid. p. 254.

decrease in the registered and an increase in the unregistered women: the latter increasing the risks of disease. The remedies he proposed are such as could only have been suggested by an Administrator utterly baffled in the pursuit of his object.

The other Continental Regulationists writing of the experience of other cities are continually treating of these features as cropping up to their dismay wherever the system is tried for a lengthened period. Unregulated prostitution growing up outside of and defying the most energetic and skilful efforts to bring it within their sanitary *cordon*, is the *bête noire* of all regulationists, and they attack it with a vigour and persistency that show at once its magnitude and vitality.

The cause of the difficulty may be easily traced. It lies in the intense repugnance, felt even by profligate women to the degradation which enrolment on the Regulationist register involves. Let the Regulationists themselves describe it. Dr. Hippolyte Mireur, of Marseilles, who pleads that the system should be extended to the whole civilised world, says: "The system of registration which regulates and legalises the sorrowful industry of the prostitute is, in fact, the sinister stroke by which women are cut off from society, and after which they no longer belong to themselves, but become merely the chattel of the administration."* Mons. Lenaers, in his report, before referred to, writes: "No doubt the inscription on the rolls is an exceedingly grave and delicate matter, if one considers the position in which a woman who is the object of it is placed; for while this inscription is only a simple administrative act, having for its object to compel the woman to submit to medical inspection, none the less does it impose upon her a patent of infamy and degradation."

These descriptions of the condition into which women enter when brought by registration within the sanitary *cordon*, are written by men who had every motive for giving a favourable rather than an unfavourable view of everything pertaining to the system. They are certain, therefore, not to have overdrawn the picture. Such a result of enrolment supplies a tremendous motive for evading it by every possible means. Even those who have entered on the downward course of vice, resist to the utmost the attempt to drag them within a portal over which is written in blazing characters, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." It is long ere women who have commenced a profligate career, adopt it as a permanence. They generally look forward to a return to better things some day. It is a fact well known to the Rescue Societies, that as a rule the greater number manage somehow to struggle out of their evil way, after following it on the average for not more than four years. This is in countries where the regulation system does not apply. But where this system is in force, the whole aspect of things is changed. For it is one of the acknowledged necessities of that system to put obstacles in the way of removal from the register, and while a woman's name is on that roll of infamy, she is subjected to authorised outrage, every repetition of which destroys some remaining spark of womanly hope, until not a vestige is left. She knows full well that all this is done with a distinct view to, and to fit her for, continued degradation. Cruel as it is, it is not *punishment* for vice, inflicted in the hope of preventing her from sinking deeper therein, but it is a deliberate preparation of a victim for the lowest hell. No wonder then that she exercises all her arts to escape it. No wonder that, with such a motive, she baffles even the most skilful police. Everyone will recognise this as a *moral* force. It defeats, and ever will defeat, the sanitary regulation of social vice.

It does not however work alone, for, strange to say, the evasion is assisted

* "La Syphilis et la Prostitution," p. 248.

by a large portion of the men for whose benefit the regulations profess to be established. There is a certain refinement of corruption brought into play by the regulation system itself. Many men seeing the way in which others rush in crowds to take advantage of the system, seek for something more select outside the *cordon*, and, having found it, they try to keep it select, and to prevent its becoming known to the sanitary police. Hence they aid the women in their evasion, and, between the two, the officers are outwitted and checkmated at every turn.

The difficulty of enrolling the women is not the only one encountered by the regulationist. Even within the *cordon* they try to avoid the hated inspection. Mr. W. H. Sloggett, Inspector of the Hospitals established under the English regulations, told the Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1869, that the women would not submit without the application of *terror*. The needful terror is inspired by the imprisonment which the regulation system always inflicts for continuous non-attendance at the ordeal. But with all the force they can bring to bear upon the women within the *cordon*, Regulationists still complain of fatal negligence in this respect. The difficulty however disappears as soon as the women take the final step downwards and become inmates of the licensed or inspected house of debauchery. There the terrors of the keepers of the house are added to the terrors of the police, and resistance is at last utterly hopeless. The Regulationist unblushingly declares that "The licensed brothel is the basis of all regulation of prostitution,"* and it is his avowed object to drive all the registered women into such houses, for there and there alone can his system be carried out to perfection.† But he has a terrible story to tell of the condition of the women when thus perfected. "The girl in the licensed brothel, is the type *par excellence* of the prostitute. She is the modern slave who, having sacrificed her personality, has become the tool of the brothel keeper, and the property of the public. It is almost superfluous to say how prejudicial to their health is the life of these unfortunates. Want of air and of exercise, the abuse of drink and tobacco, venereal disease and excesses of all kinds, destructive of the most robust frame, exercise a fatal influence on these poor creatures, who, in consequence of privations in their youth, are only of delicate constitution. Death also, in making them pay tribute to chest-diseases, strikes most of them down in the flower of their age.

* Lecour.—"La Prostitution à Paris et à Londres." Paris, 1872. P. 137.

"The prosperity of the public houses of prostitution, * * * * * is, properly speaking, the essential basis of the best organizations for preventing disease." "La Syphilis et la Prostitution," by Dr. Hippolyte, Mireur of Marseilles—p. 367.

† Mons. Lenaers, in his Report before referred to, writes:—

"I consider it desirable not to place the working of brothels (*l'exploitation des maisons de tolerance*) under any restrictions except those strictly demanded by the public interest. These houses present several advantages. Their keepers, being interested in the maintenance of order, are themselves a police; they watch over the health of their girls, they exact their regular submission to the examination, and send them to the hospital on the least suspicion of illness. The reputation and the prestige of their establishment depend on the security in regard to their health which their clients find there, on the guarantee given to them of not being exposed to anything disagreeable, and the assurance that their presence in such places will never be divulged. Through these causes the keepers of the houses become in a manner the auxiliaries of the police. It is therefore of importance that prostitution should be as much as possible gathered into houses of debauchery, where it can be easily superintended, and where all scandal is concealed, and in fact does not exist except for those who seek it."

"If houses of debauchery are necessary, and if it behoves us to endeavour to maintain them, this is not less the case with houses of assignation. Nevertheless at the present there is a great deficiency of these latter."

It is then, not without reason, that it is sometimes said, in speaking of prostitution, that its last asylum is the hospital. It is almost always, we are not afraid to add, the fatal end of the women of the licensed brothels. If it were possible to prepare reliable statistics in reference to this, it would be seen that the great majority of girls who have figured in this class on the register of the Bureau des Mœurs, figure also on the mortuary registers of charitable institutions for the suffering. Debauchery supported them yesterday; it slays them to-day.* "When once the girl enters there, she bids adieu to heaven, to liberty, to honour, and to the world."† Is it any wonder then that at this point also the Regulationists have to record their own defeat? They continually deplore the fact that "the licensed houses diminish in number, but only to reappear in forms which increase the sanitary risk."‡ The houses within the *cordon* constantly decrease, while those outside as surely increase. Regulationists attribute this to the hatred of brothel-slavery by the women, and their intense reluctance to step into the horrible abyss.

Here again we trace the operation of a moral force, which regulationists confess they have hitherto been powerless to overcome.

We must now point out the full hygienic significance of this result. The women inside the *cordon* are divisible into two classes—those who are segregated in the hospitals, and those who are allowed to ply their trade. The former are, in the subjected districts in England, about one-seventh of the whole. Let it be conceded that the remaining six-sevenths form a body freer from detectable disease than they would do if the one-seventh had not been separated from them. This represents, *when taken by itself*, a definite lessening of the sanitary risk. There are facts to be considered which greatly modify and counteract this apparent advantage, but for the present we wish to deal with it as if it were a benefit fully realised, without any deduction. Let it be put into one scale. There is a great counterpoise now to be put into the other before we can estimate its effect on what Regulationists term "the public health." That counterpoise consists of a serious increase of disease in the women outside the *cordon*, the direct result of the regulations, which practically close against them the public hospitals to which they would otherwise resort. These women outside the *cordon* enormously outnumber those within, (Mons. Lecour estimates them at *five times* as many,) and a *small* increase of disease among *them* will counterbalance a very large decrease among the lesser number that we put into the first scale. This is obviously a matter that cannot be reduced to anything like accurate measurement, but Regulationists are so continually and so strongly referring to the increasing sanitary risk outside their arrangements, that the balance of sanitary advantage, even if they fully secure it, must be extremely small.

We say the hospitals are virtually closed against outsiders. In places where the regulations do not apply, the women have no objection to avail themselves of such hospital accommodation as a benevolent public or municipal care provides. Some of them secure medical assistance in the ordinary way by paying for it on their own account. But wherever the regulations are introduced and a lynx-eyed police are put on to their track, the women believe that the hospitals and surgeries are watched; and in fear lest they should be brought within the *cordon*, they go on secretly practising vice without obtaining relief. Hence

* "La Syphilis et la Prostitution," by Dr. Mireux, p. 279.

† Alphonse Esquiros, quoted by Dr. Mireux, p. 279.

‡ Lecour, "La Prostitution à Paris et à L r s, page 256.

arises the high rate of disease of which the Regulationists complain as existing outside the *cordon*, and for which their own operations are directly responsible. The same moral force to which we have before alluded—that of desiring to avoid a deepened degradation—is again the cause of defeat. It is touching to note, how poor human nature continually struggles against its own final destruction, and for the retention of some remnant or rag of human dignity.

In England the experience is the same as on the Continent; but the officials who work the Contagious Diseases Acts studiously conceal the fact. In 1870, they found that their only hope of retaining the Acts lay in their putting forward some good moral results, as a set off against the self-evident corrupting tendency of the measure. From that time to this they have tried to make moral capital out of features, which, if they understand their business, they know are fatal to the sanitary objects they have in view. They parade before Parliament and the public the statement that the number of women and inspected houses of debauchery in the district under their control has greatly diminished. But they carefully abstain from stating (as they ought to do) that this diminution is only of the women and houses within the *cordon*. They carefully shut their eyes to what is outside. If they see it and report it, the vaunted moral attributes of the Acts will topple down like a house of cards. Other observers can see it plainly enough. Surgeon-Major Gordon, at the International Medical Congress, held in London in August last, stated that the large amount of clandestine prostitution, which he himself knew to exist in the districts under the Acts, was in his opinion a great argument for their extension. He looked at it from the standpoint of an honest Regulationist, and he blurted out a fact for which the officials won't thank him just now. In process of time, however, if they succeed in hoodwinking the English people till familiarity with the evil thing has as effectually deadened the national conscience, as it has done in some foreign capitals, they will turn round and plead that their enrolling so few women, their having so few houses under inspection, and the great decrease in the number of very young girls that they get hold of, prevent their sanitary success, and must be remedied by greater police powers and extended areas under their operation. In one respect there is a wide contrast between the result of a reduction in the number of women on the regulationist register, and a reduction of prostitution (in a district not under the regulations) brought about by a righteous and wise law, sincerely intended to discourage vice. In the English districts under the Contagious Diseases Acts, the fewer women individually receive more money and are, according to the official evidence, "better fed, better clothed, better off." Whereas in Glasgow, where there are no such regulations, but where there is a good municipal law for the suppression of brothels, worked side by side with an active Magdalen Society, and an excellent hospital, which receives fallen women with a view to restoring them to a state of health that shall fit them to return to virtuous society, the result is that prostitutes are poorer and very often clothed in rags. In the one case, prostitution is made a better trade—a fact which entices many women into what regulationists term "illicit prostitution" (just as an exciseman talks of "illicit distillation"), while in the other case we see precisely the opposite tendency and result. The one encourages prostitution while the other as surely deters from it.

There is another force set in motion by the Regulationists, which we know not whether to term moral or immoral. Looked at on the principle that it is every man's duty to preserve his own health, we should term it *moral*. But when considered as a merely selfish attempt to avoid the risks, while indulging in the practice, of sexual vice, we instinctively feel it to be *immoral*. But be that as it may, this force belongs to the domain of morals, which includes both good and evil.

Nothing is more natural than that the men, whose benefit the Regulationist is supposed to promote, should seek to secure the most of that benefit, if they avail themselves at all of the regulations. Hence they crowd to take advantage of those short intervals at which they presume the risk is reduced to a minimum. Here arises a new risk (that of "Mediate Contagion," by which disease is conveyed from man to man), which Regulationists left entirely out of their original reckoning, but which medical Specialists are now beginning to look at, as accounting for a few things they could not before understand. This alone is sufficient to neutralise the benefit which we before conceded, as *apparently* arising within the *cordon*.

Before entering on the yet larger considerations with which we must conclude, we will take leave of the Regulationists, for the remainder of our argument can derive no help from them. Our readers will be inclined to ask, how is it that these gentlemen still hold on to methods, which, according to their own shewing, signally fail? We reply:—They are labouring under a monomania. Like the Alchemists of old, who, in search of a mode of converting baser materials into gold, still hoped, after each failure, to succeed at the next step—these men always see something looming ahead, which they hope will accomplish their object. At one time it is the rewarding of the women for regular attendance at inspection; at another it is the shortening of the intervals between the inspections; at another it is the giving of more power to the police; at another it is the entering into International Conventions for bringing every seaport within the *cordon*; and at another it is the establishment of houses of assignation by municipal councils, where women and girls may meet their lovers for infamous purposes and yet may be regarded as "honourable"—now one and now another of these things is to complete the system and make it a real success. The Regulationists are pursuing a phantom; and everyone knows how such a pursuit blinds the pursuer to his own folly. In the 44th chapter of Isaiah there is a sarcastic description of the besetting folly of making an idol of one end of a log while kindling a fire for cooking with the other. The prophet thus describes the resulting effect on the mental and moral condition of the idol worshipper:—"He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside; that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, 'Is there not a lie in my right hand?'" So it is with the Regulationist.

In no case that we are aware of, except the one now before us, do medical men attempt to rid society of any infectious disease, by means which directly stimulate and increase the vitality of its cause. It is a truism, that ought not to need repeating, that *vice* and *vice only* is the cause of the diseases which the State supervision of prostitution seeks to eradicate. But so soon as the State undertakes to supervise the traffic in vice, that traffic is placed on a moral level with other supervised trades. It becomes a lawful business, and the whole influence of the State operates in favour of, and not against it.* Now if any statesman wished to increase the trade in vice he could not devise a more effectual method than that of supervising and subsidising it. This is precisely what the regulation system does. Whether it does or does not succeed in making the vice healthy, matters comparatively little so far as its moral effect is concerned. The influence of supervision is a force which, like that of gravitation, never sleeps. Under it vice becomes reputable, grows rapidly, and strikes its roots deep. As it spreads, the area of sanitary risk proportionately widens, and more people fall victims to disease.

* This position is not affected by the existence, side by side with the supervision, of some laws under which the keepers of houses of debauchery may be prosecuted, because many lawful trades are subject to prosecution, when carried on so as to become a nuisance to the neighbourhood.

Thus again we see the regulation system defeating itself—this time by a morally corrupting force which it sets in motion and maintains.

When the Regulation system is put forward on the plea of promoting "The Public Health," we must claim that that term shall be taken in its widest signification. For there lie beyond the diseases, to which alone the system addresses itself, consequences even more disastrous than they. The increased indulgence in vice that assuredly arises from its supervision by the State, steadily lowers the vital force of the individual, and eats out the stamina of his constitution, even when it produces no specific disease. This deteriorated *physique* is communicated to his offspring, along with a lowered moral power to resist the temptations to repeat the profligacy which has produced it. Thus each succeeding generation becomes less vigorous than its predecessor. An increasing proportion of weakly children are born, to drag out a suffering existence or to fall an easy prey to any epidemic that may arise. This condition of things is very perceptible in the large cities of France—the country which has had the longest and widest experience of Regulation.

What more need be adduced? We have come at last to a dire result of the regulation system, that dwarfs into insignificance the sum total of advantage which it promises but never gives. We have shown how it fails, and how it *must* fail, even in regard to the specific diseases which it delusively professes to stamp out or greatly to mitigate. We have traced its failure to the operation of moral forces, which it puts forth all its powers to destroy, but which it is of the highest national importance to conserve: and to the working of *immoral* forces which it brings into play and stimulates, but of which the national interest demands the repression.

With all this before us, we come to the conclusion that the highest science, the truest wisdom, and the most far-seeing expediency call upon the English people to hold fast by the GREAT MORAL LAW,—to have done for ever with this hideous medical crotchet of attempting to make vice healthy—and henceforth resolutely to decline all proposals which would "make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

This Paper was read at St. George's Hall, Bradford, on the 26th January, 1882, at the Annual Conference of the "Northern Counties League for Abolishing State Regulation of Vice, and for promoting Social Purity and the Rescue of the Fallen."

Copies may be had from the Office of the League, 255, Pittsmoor road, Sheffield; HENRY J. WILSON, Hon. Sec.; or, from F. C. BANKS, 2, Westminster Chambers, Victoria street, Westminster, S.W.

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